THE WOMAN'S

DREADNOUGHT

Published by the WORKERS' SUFFRAGE FEDERATION

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QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

PEACE PROSPECTS

The prospect of Peaceappears to havecome wonderfully near during the last few days. Indeed, there now seems even a possibility that the demonstrations we pacifist organisations are planning for the near future may be transformed into meetings of rejoicing. The American request to negotiate has been followed by a similar Note from Switzerland.

The German reply to the American Note is a proposal for "an immediate meeting of delegates of the belligerent States at some neutral place" and an expression of willingness to collaborate with America in preventing future wars.

The Russian Prime Minister has rebuffed the American Note as he rebuffed that of Germany, and his reply is sinister, not merely because he says:

"The War with the Central Powers will continue à outrance and until a decisive victory has been won."

but also because, answering the American appeal for a League of Nations and the abolition of sectional alliances, he says:

"A firm assurance is given that after the war the military Alliance between Russia and France and Great Britain will be consolidated by a close economic union."

But in spite of such truculent manifestations, the war spirit is waning and Peace is in the air. Mr. Austen Chamberlain, the British Secretary of State for War, has summoned the Prime Ministers of the self-governing colonies to consider "urgent questions affecting the prosecution of the War" and

"the possible conditions on which, in agreement with our Allies we could assent to its termination and the problems which will then immediately arise."

Here is an admission, by the way, that the British Government has not yet decided what it is fighting for. The conference is fixed for the end of February, which would seem to indicate at least two weary months of waiting for the ending of the War. But it takes a long time to journey here from Australia and New Zealand. Let us work to insure that the War shall be over before the Premiers from the Dominions arrive! Let us get on with the Peace campaign. There is no mention of inviting Ireland to the Conference.

According to the British Press, the French also appear to have rebuffed the German offer to negotiate, the Senate having passed a resolution that France cannot make peace with an enemy that occupies her territory, and the Foreign Affairs Committee having asked the Premier not to reply to President Wilson.

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A Bill was introduced into the French Parliament to give the Cabinet power to make laws without consent of Parliament it was referred to a Committee which has rejected the measure by 24 votes to 2.

THE PEACE SERVICE

The Service for Peace, held in Trafalgar Square last Sunday, was both sad and strange. Very fervently the hymns were sung by men and women pacifists. But a crowd, partly composed of colonial soldiers, martialled and prompted by certain middle-aged civilians, who have become familiar as disturbers of meetings, continually broke in with strident yells and music-hall songs. Two soldiers who stood near the front looked on sad-eyed for a time, then quietly moved away.

Dr. Orchard, a slight figure in black cassock, led the prayers. To those in front it seemed impossible that his low voice could be heard above the din, but it carried surprisingly to the outskirts of the crowd.

After the conclusion of the short service, men and women remained in the Square for many hours discussing the event which had obviously thrilled them and had aroused in many a longing for the end of hostilities which had before seemed too hopelessly far away to dwell upon.

There had been much uncertainty as to the time of the service, and numbers of pacifists who arrived after it was over, remained to mingle with the throng.

Soldier after soldier was heard to say, "We all want peace" and "we shall never end it by fighting," though the story that the service was paid for by Germany was industriously circulated amongst them.

"How did the Australian soldiers vote on conscription?" was a question often asked of them: almost invariably the reply was: "We voted 'No' because we didn't want our mates to be made to come." Somebody offered a copy of the DREADNOUGHT to an Australian soldier. "I think you're going to make me sad, girlie," he said, "I came all those thousands of miles to do my bit. I'd rather not be discouraged, but I'll read it."

PEACE MEETING

IN

VICTORIA PARK (Crown Gate Entrance)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31st, 3 p.m.

To call upon the Government to negotiate without delay for an honourable Peace.

Speakers: MISS SYLVIA PANKHURST, MRS. BOUVIER, MRS. BOYCE, MRS. CRESSALL, MRS. DRAKE, MISS LYNCH, MISS PRICE, MRS. WALKER.

PENSIONERS BAND YOURSELVES TOGETHER

In the House of Lords, the Marquess of Salisbury moved an amendment to the Pensions Bill to terminate the office of Pensions Minister twelve months after the War, and urged that the Statutory Committee should administer the pensions on the lines of the Charity Commission. The Earl of Selborne warned the House that pensioners might band themselves together to bring pressure to bear on Members of Parliament if pensions were controlled by Parliament.

Of course they will! That is exactly what we want. Join the League of Rights for Soldiers' and Sailors' wives and relatives and disabled soldiers, and make haste about it!

PUTTING ON THE SCREW.

At Coventry munition workers charged with bad time-keeping are reported to the local Labour Advisory Board, which consists of seven representatives of the trade unions concerned in the production of munitions. The "Manchester Guardian" says that: "An appeal is made to the imagination, the conscience and the honour of the offender," who is warned that should no improvement take place within a fortnight he will be tried by the Munitions Tribunal and left undefended by his union. "No further time lost" is the usual result, says the "Guardian."

But what about the employers and Government departments who refuse to treat their workers decently? Who is to punish them? We think that judgment by the workers can only be satisfactorily established if the workers in the workshop where the offence has been committed are empanelled and if the workers concerned have a voice in the making of the rules.

FOOD PRICES

Mr. Prothero, the President of the Board of Agriculture, announces that he is going to fix the price of staple commodities. Wheat is to be 60s. a quarter, nearly double the pre-War price. Poor people have little to hope from the national food control as administered by the present Government.

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Anti-War feeling is growing space in France, as is natural, considering that the War sufferings of France have far exceeded those of this country. The new French Ministry under M. Briand, the French equivalent of Lloyd George, was received by the hostile vote of 107 members out of a total of 552.

Ex-Inspector Syme has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment under the Defence of the Realm Act, nominally for speeches in Hyde Park and Regent's Park, really because he is endeavouring to build up a police and prison officers' trade union.

CHINESE POEMS

Mr. Henderson, of the Bomb Shop, does not only publish revolutionary literature and plays banned by the police. He has just issued twenty-five dreamy and gentle Chinese poems paraphrased by Clifford Bax. For the most part they are brief impressions of fleeting natural scenes. Here are three stray stanzas taken from different poems to show their quality:—

A cloud of blossom trembled, broke, and fell;
Stirred only when the soft vibration cast
From out the old hill-temple floated past
At sounding of the mournful evening bell
(How brief a while the cheery petals last!)

The clouds that bear upon their wings the rain
Turn homeward now toward the mountain tops;
And on the maple leaves I hear again
The first few large and hesitating drops.

Over the river's course the boughs have made
A roof so thick that not a single beam
From the sun's bow can pierce their massive shade;
Left by the heavy showers, on either hand
The water-weeds peer from the shallow sand;
The little ducks with light and callous hearts
Go chasing the dropped petals down the stream;
They grieve no whit because the spring departs.

Here is one of the longer poems. We choose it for its lofty and beautiful philosophy, which is so tenderly expressed.

A WINTER'S NIGHT.

The road of human life is far more steep
Than any mountain road;
The poor man frets beneath a long oppression,
Yet the rich man supports a heavier load,
For where is any trouble half so deep
As much possession?

It seemed as I was reading here to-night
The sage's book, now closed and put in place,
That each word threw a halo of soft light
Up to my bended face.

The world is quiet. Only the falling snow
Flutters against the window, soft and shy,
And on the paper shadows come and go;
Moon-shadows of a rough and cloudy sky.
The pine tree close at hand,
Rocked by the North, begins to sob and moan.
Who is there now that could not understand
How men by everything they call their own
Do but weigh down the common weight of care
That rich or poor must bear?

THE COMMUNITY OF NATIONS

"The Community of Nations"* is a useful outline of international relationships, "based on consent, not on coercion." It has been prepared by a group of people who, whilst in sympathy with the ideals of the League to Enforce Peace, are opposed to the view put forward that international relationships should be based on a pledge to use coercion to enforce the decisions arrived at by the League of Nations. The foreword announces that the pamphlet may be obtained from Dr. Hodgkin, Mr. Carl Heath, and Mr. Pethick Lawrence, and we therefore conclude that they are its authors. The outline appears to us to be entirely practical and businesslike, though we should like to add many additional provisions in regard to the election of the suggested Congress of National Representatives, Courts of Arbitration and Justice, and Council of Conciliation, and in regard to their control by the people.

The arguments against the application of international coercion are ably set forth. It is shown that if, in order to secure an international coercive force, some scheme such as the provision of a quota of army and navy by each nation and the restriction of national armies and navies were devised, this would be a fruitful cause of dispute. The difficulty of deciding either which party to a dispute being in the wrong should be coerced or which nation caused the war is dwelt upon; the present War is sufficient illustration of this point. It is wisely urged that if the nations participating in the Conference are not pledged to action in support of the decision, their representatives may be left free to judge each case upon its merits, but, if the decision will pledge the nations to war, the Government of each nation will tend to instruct its representatives to vote with a view to its own chances of success in a possible war. It is pointed out that peace based on armed coercion is likely to degenerate into a tyranny of the powerful nations, and that the only lasting peace can be that which is secured by the public opinion of the civilised world.

* The St. Clement's Press. 1d., from Dr. Hodgkin, Carl Heath, and F. W. Pethick Lawrence, 4 Clement's Inn, Strand, W.C.

Have you sent your New Year Gift to the Dreadnought Fund? We are trying to raise a fund of £500.

The W.S.F. Christmas Sale at 400 Old Ford Road was much enjoyed, and between £8 and £10 was realised, for which the Finance Committee of the Federation desires to tender its grateful thanks to Miss King, who acted as Secretary, Miss O'Brien and Mrs. Snedden, who presided over the refreshments; Mrs. Holloway, who had the rather chilly work of taking tickets; Mrs. Payne and Nurse Hebbes at the Garment Stall; Mrs. Farrall and Miss Smith at the Toy Stall; Mrs. Cressall, China Stall; Mrs. Savoy, Groceries; Mrs. Drake, Books and Literature; Mrs. Hart, Fancy Goods; Nurse Connolly and the Misses Lagrding, Games; Miss Smith, who sang and recited, and a host of other friends.

W.S.F. CALENDARS for 1917

Containing thirteen pictures and quotations from the "Woman's Dreadnought" The most charming and up-to-date Calendar of the Season. Price 1/- each, or 9/- per dozen from 400 Old Ford Road, London, E., all W.S.F. branches, The International Suffrage Shop, Reformers Book Stall, Glasgow, "Our Shop," Merthyr, &c.

W.S.F. NEW YEAR DANCE

at BOW BATHS, Roman Road

SATURDAY, JAN. 13, 1917, at 8 p.m.

TICKETS - 6d. each. From 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E.

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All business communications should be sent to the MANAGER, 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E.

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Bravely and willingly we bear our share of the World's burdens. Why, then, deny us the right to Vote, which would dignify our labour and increase our Power of Service?

The Shame of War!

She always worked; if she were ever ill, at any rate she never stopped toiling, except when her babies were born, and she had six of them, the eldest twelve and the youngest less than one year. Her husband gave her 22s. a week and bought the children's boots, and when he had a good week, which meant that he worked longer hours and earned money for overtime, he bought the Sunday dinner, and perhaps some other little extras. She herself earned 15s. a week by tailoring. It was a struggle to make ends meet, and every hour of her waking life was filled. But the children were fat and rosy, and the husband never missed a day's work.

Then the war came, and her husband enlisted.

He was taken away for training; his wages ceased; no money came from the War Office. At the same time the factory she worked for could give her nothing to do.

She went to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families' Association, and waited several times in a long queue of women until the office door was shut, before she had even a chance to plead for help. The children were all hungry, and day by day she pawned something to buy a little food. Her turn to be interviewed came at last. The young woman secretary with the peremptory manner and high-pitched voice had far more work to do than she could possibly attend to, and simply told her to call again.

This happened twice, but at the third interview particulars of her case were taken, and she was told to go home and wait for a visitor. But three weeks passed, and no visitor came. All the things in the house that could be pawned had gone by then, and she had not a scrap of food to give to the children.

Other women were going to the Workers' Suffrage Federation at 400 Old Ford Road. She decided to go there, too, and saw one of the secretaries in the office crowded with other women who had come on the same errand. The immediate pangs of hunger were relieved before she and the children left 400 Old Ford Road, and the people at the S.S.F.A. had been worried over the telephone till they promised to make an advance of money, and they and the War Office were written to and pestered for further grants. But the S.S.F.A. money came in irregularly, and was a good deal less than she had been accustomed to, whilst prices were rising fast.

She got a little sewing-machining to do, but trade was still slack, and she could not earn more than 10s. a week. After three months the separation allowance began to be paid, but she did not get all the arrears that were due to her, and, as she thought she had given enough trouble to the people at 400 and the War Office paid no attention to her letters, she let the matter drop.

She began to have a hacking cough in the autumn, and during the winter it got worse. In the early part of the new year she had a severe attack of bronchitis and pleurisy, and the doctor told her that she had a tendency to consumption and ought to go to a sanatorium. She had no one to leave the children with, and she let three months drift away, hoping that either the war would end or something would happen to make it easier for her to go. Then she became seriously ill and had to be taken away at once, and her sister managed somehow to take some care of the children as well as of her own family. Much of the responsibility fell upon the eldest little girl, who was now fourteen and able to stay at home.

The mother stayed at the sanatorium from May to July, and was sent home worse than when she went in. In the same month her husband was discharged from the Army, ill with gastric ulcers. He had been in hospital on and off for five months before, though during the whole of their married life he had never missed a day's work through illness. Pay and separation allowance immediately stopped. Pension was refused, and the family was again destitute. The father was too ill to work. Friends and neighbours, hard-pressed to find food for their own children, generously spared an occasional shilling for these unfortunate ones, but the children often cried for hunger. "We had to manage the best way we could," said the mother—stern words so often heard in working-class homes.

After five weeks the father recovered enough to go to work, and if he feels ill he hides it from his wife. The eldest girl had learnt to take the care of the house and children upon her shoulders, and the acuteness of the crisis passed.

But the mother, a young woman of thirty-six, is dying fast. She will never leave her bed again; a neighbour comes in to help the little girl to make it with the sick woman lying there.

The doctor orders brandy every hour, but his order is never executed except when he leaves 2s. on the table before he goes. He orders milk, and she gets that, because it comes from the "Mothers' Arms." A lady visitor from the Insurance Commissioners called round a little while ago to see if she were working, but, though she must surely have seen the signs of death on the patient's face no disablement benefit is being paid.

The family rent half a workman's cottage; in the tiny ground floor back room, which is their parlour, is the mother's bed. There is just space for it, the sideboard, and enough passage way for those who come in and out, or stay to sit beside her. The door is never shut, the children play, and quarrel, by her bed, and she must always watch them, too weak to take them in her arms. Fearing that she had grown to be a burden on her children, she asked to be taken to the infirmary, but the doctor has said that she is too weak to be moved. When she is able she toils, still doing fancy work to earn a few pennies.

A hole in the window is patched with brown paper. Outside is grey and cheerless, and the rain pours down from a dull sky. Not a blade of grass grows in the trodden ground of the yard. But the mother's eyes do not see even the wet earth and the falling rain. They are turned to the dingy walls of the little room, the few poor bits of furniture and the fireless grate. She lies in the shadow telling her hopeless story. The eldest girl and her three-year old baby sister sit clinging together for warmth, both listening to their mother's tale. When they are old women they will remember it; for them it will be part of the history of the great War.

It is part of that history for the mother. She tells of her struggles and privations; her bitter regret to die so young and leave her children; to be deprived of the necessities that might have saved her, to toil so hard merely to die so soon. Overhanging her tragic fate she feels the great War tragedy; she knows that her life's shipwreck has happened on the fringe of a vast whirlpool of disaster, and interwoven with her story is her pity for the millions of sufferers in every land. Her husband has fought for his country in the "glorious War of freedom," and now his children are short of food and his wife must turn to charity for some easement of her passage out of life. He has done his part for the Government: the Government has, now, done with him.

The speeches of politicians and the pages of newspapers are full of calls to sacrifice, and if the efforts of peace-makers are thrust aside by the jingoes, it is probable that the sacrifice wrung from the people will strike deeper yet and vitally affect greater numbers. We have long waited for President Wilson to intervene in the interests of Peace. It is long since he first indicated his wish to do so, and his re-election should have swept away all doubts as to the desires of the American people. At last he has made the first move; it has been ill-received by the British capitalist Press, but that matters infinitely less than it would have done a year ago, for truths are now filtering into the public mind which are gradually enabling it to come to an independent judgment. Moreover, the power of America has grown as the belligerents have dissipated their resources; very soon America will be in a position to dictate what she will to the Great Powers of Europe.

The main burden of the President's note is, in brief, that:—(1) The belligerent nations should now state the terms on which they are prepared to end the War, and the guarantees against future War, which they will accept; (2) that America is as much concerned in world peace as other nations and as anxious to secure the rights of the smaller and weaker peoples; (3) that her interests have been seriously affected by the War; and (4) "that it is manifestly necessary to safeguard those interests if the War is to continue."

As to steps which he may take to safeguard American interests the President gives no indication; but Mr. Lansing, the American Secretary of State, has said:—

"We are drawing nearer to the verge of war ourselves, and therefore we are entitled to know exactly what each belligerent seeks in order that we may regulate our conduct in future."

Does that mean that America will make War on the belligerents who refuse to state their terms or who demand unreasonable terms?

Or does the President intend to give his adherence to the growing volume of opinion in America which declares that the export of food and munitions from America shall be stopped, in order to save the American people from privations and to hasten the ending of the War?

President Wilson very truly points out that whilst "the concrete objects" for which the War is being waged, "have never been definitely stated" by either side, yet, as announced in general terms by the leaders of several belligerents, "they seem the same."

"Each side," he says, "desires to make the rights and privileges of weak peoples and small States as secure against aggression or denial in the future as the rights and privileges of the great and powerful States now at war. Each wishes itself to be made secure in the future, along with all other nations and peoples, against the recurrence of wars like this, and against aggression or selfish interference of any kind. Each would be jealous of the formation of any more rival leagues to preserve an uncertain balance of power amidst multiplying suspicions; but each is ready to consider the formation of a league of nations to insure peace and justice throughout the world. Before that final step can be taken, however, each deems it necessary first to settle the issues of the present War upon terms which will certainly safeguard the independence, the territorial integrity, and the political and commercial freedom of the nations involved."

These passages have aroused the special ire of the British Press. The "Manchester Guardian" suggests that they may be taken as "a very severe piece of sarcasm" against Germany. But alas, the sarcasm may rightly be applied to both sides! The "Daily Chronicle," which at present adopts a more bellicose and irreconcilable tone than any other newspaper, indignantly protests:—

"The President takes Germany's word at par! It is as good as ours—no better, no worse. What have we done to deserve such an attitude? Is it we that have torn up treaties, that have trampled on weak nations for no better reason than their weakness, that have blotted out in blood almost every line of the Hague Conventions? Have we ever trapped an innocent victim with lies, as Germany trapped Belgium in July-August, 1914? Was it we that wantonly refused every one of the expedients that might have saved peace thirty months ago—the Conference of Powers or the Hague Tribunal? Is it we whose war prisoners have to be fed on parcels from their own country, because their captors starve them? Is it we that have herded surrendered men into typhus camps . . ."

Unfortunately, if we would face the truth, we must answer "Yes" to questions such as these, for British Governments also have been guilty of such crimes."

"Is it we that have torn up treaties and trampled on weak nations?"

Yes, the British Government tore up the treaty of Madrid, of 1880, and the Act of Algeciras of 1906, by which Britain was a guarantor of the integrity, independence, and economic liberty of Morocco, and whilst publicly pledging itself to Moroccan independence Britain agreed with France and Spain that they should divide Morocco into French and Spanish spheres, in order that Britain might maintain unchallenged the occupation of Egypt, which we had promised should be temporary.

"Have we ever trapped an innocent victim with lies?"

Yes, many times. One instance is that of Persia. In 1906 the Persians revolted against their Shah, and obtained from him a constitution and a Parliament. In 1907 the British Government concluded an understanding with Russia that Persia should be divided into Russian and British spheres of economic influence, whilst guaranteeing "the integrity and independence of Persia." Mr. Cecil Spring Rice, the British Minister, wrote to the Persian Government assuring them that their independence was secure; indeed, the object of this British and Russian convention was:—

"not to allow one another to intervene on the pretext of safeguarding their interests. The two Powers hope that in the future Persia will be for ever delivered from the fear of foreign intervention."

In spite of this pledge, Russia at once proceeded to destroy the new-won Persian constitution, and encouraged the Shah to defy it in every way. The Persians prepared to depose the Shah, but it was intimated to them that if they did so Russia would intervene. They decided to submit to a native despotism rather than risk the imposition of a foreign one, but the Shah and his Russo-Persian Cossack brigade bombarded the Parliament House at Teheran and slaughtered some of its members. The Persian people rose against the Shah at Tabriz, but Russian troops raised the siege and occupied Tabriz. Sir Edward Grey assented to Russia's action, and pledged himself to the

(Continued on page 637)

THE SHAME OF WAR—(continued from page 636).

Persians that the occupation should be temporary. Nevertheless, the Russian Garrison at Tabriz became permanent, but in spite of it the Persian Nationalists triumphed for a time, until the Persian Government found it necessary to borrow money. Britain and Russia then offered to arrange a loan on condition that they should control its expenditure. Persia, remembering that such an arrangement had proved the downfall of Egypt, declined this offer, and arranged a loan with a London firm on their own account, but the British Foreign Office vetoed it. The ultimatum from the two Powers was clear: "Borrow money as we direct or not at all." In November, 1910, Russia concluded an agreement with Germany to allow Germany to build the Berlin to Bagdad Railway on condition that Germany agreed to Russian encroachments in Persia.

In 1911 the Persian Government engaged the American, Mr. Morgan Shuster, to reorganise its finances, and to advise them as to how to meet the crafty Western capitalist. Mr. Shuster wished to engage Major Stokes, a British officer, to create a police force to collect Persian taxes. The British Government agreed, then withdrew its assent in response to Russian protests. When Russian troops attacked and vanquished the Persian police, Sir Edward Grey counselled the Persians to yield, assuring them that if they did so the Russian troops would withdraw. This promise was broken, the Russian troops remained, and Sir Edward Grey concurred in Russia's demand that Mr. Morgan Shuster should be dismissed and that Russia and Britain should in future exercise a veto over all appointments of foreigners to the Persian service. The Persian reactionaries conceded these demands and dissolved the Parliament, and on Christmas Day, 1911, a Russian field court-martial hanged 26 Persian popular leaders and the principal ecclesiastic of Tabriz. Persia was thus betrayed to Russia by the British Government, and Persian independence was altogether destroyed.

"Was it we that wantonly refused every one of the expedients that might have saved peace thirty months ago?"

Thirty months ago was too late to save the peace that has been broken; one must go further back to find the origins of this War, for which our Government must bear a share of responsibility not less than that which rests upon the Governments of other nations.

"Is it we whose war prisoners have been fed on parcels from their own country, because their captors starve them?"

British wives of aliens in this country are in a worse plight, from what we can gather, than are British prisoners in Germany, and we know that some of these women are helped by food parcels sent to them by German mothers-in-law. The food supplied to prisoners of war in this country is meagre and of poor quality; they too get parcels from friends in Germany; but we think the inmates of the internment camps are better off than their wives and children who are not interned.

"Is it we that have herded surrendered men into typhus camps?"

Perhaps we have done that also, we do not know. But we do know that during the South African War we deliberately burned the homesteads and herded the women and children in concentration camps, where 20,000 of them died of typhus and other ills. The practice was defended on the score of military necessity. We were told that such cruel warfare on non-combatants was the only way to secure a speedy ending of the Boer War, though we were fighting against a smaller and a poorer people.

Therefore let us pay no heed to the dictates of military necessity. They will lead whatever nation follows them into evil practices. Let us fling aside the lying hypocrisy with which politicians are wont to blind themselves, and realise that as a nation, we too have reason to hang our heads in the sight of God.

In Germany, too, as in this and every nation, there are to be found men and women who protest that every effort to secure peace is treachery, and that the fighting must not cease until the opposing nations have been beaten to an ignominous surrender and harsh terms of punishment have been imposed. Such people are so poisoned by hatred of the peoples of other nations that they lose all sense of love and pity for their own.

But we believe that in all the nations the majority, and especially the soldiers suffering the agony of the trenches, are longing to be rid of the anger and recrimination of the War. President Wilson said that each nation would be "jealous of the formation of any more rival leagues to preserve an uncertain balance of power," but that each nation is ready to consider the formation of a league of nations to insure peace and justice throughout the world."

Is that true of our nation? Are we each one of us doing our utmost to make it true?

If our faith and our desire are but strong enough we can bring it to pass.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

PARLIAMENT AS WE SEE IT

December 19th.—The hardships among pensioned soldiers, caused by the delay before the Baker Street office issues a new book when the draft book for pensions allowances has expired, was pointed out by Mr. Snowden. Mr. Forster, however, maintained that delays are not common and are usually due to the failure of the pensioner to forward his life certificate at the right time.

* * * *

Mr. Charles Duncan maintained that Messrs. Waring and Gillow have repeatedly reduced piece-work rates.

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Sir R. Winfrey stated that a fixed price will be guaranteed for home-grown wheat for the season 1916-17!

* * * *

Mr. Currie alleged that the leading cocoa manufacturers had issued a circular threatening the Government with a long and bitter struggle against the Early Closing Regulations.

Sir G. Cave had no information.

DISCIPLINE.

Sir G. Cave defended the ban on a trade union for the police on the plea that discipline and obedience could not be maintained in a trade union.

One would have thought that discipline was the most essential thing in trade unionism!

* * * *

Mr. Devlin pointed out that the rents of labourers' cottages at Portstewart, Ireland, were being increased from 1s. 3d. to 3s., and that many of the men are at the front. Mr. Duke explained the matter by saying that the cottages would be self-supporting at the new rent of 3s.

Where is the Rent Act, we want to know?

* * * *

The order for the Second Reading of the Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill was read—whereupon Mr. Lloyd George made his first speech in the House as Prime Minister. We dealt fully with it in our last issue.

NO IRISH POLICY.

Mr. Redmond took the opportunity of condemning the Prime Minister's speech because no Irish policy was defined. Mr. Lloyd George said he had had no time. Things less important than the Irish settlement, however, had been considered, and Mr. Redmond's indignation—tardy as it was—was a healthy sign that the Irish are tired of being the "step-child" of the Empire.

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The Volunteer Bill was read a third time and passed.

* * * *

December 20th.—Mr. Devlin denounced the War Office for retaining two boys in the Army—both under 16—although he had sent in their birth-certificates to prove their age.

* * * *

Mr. Barlow explained the position of a man transferred to Class W of the Reserve as being "retained by the Army without pay, pension, or separation allowance." Mr. Forster admitted this, but added in the case of a man being ill some other arrangement must be made, such as restoring the man's status, &c. He promised to have the question gone into.

WAS IT MURDER?

With reference to Sir John Maxwell's action in May in Ireland, Mr. Ginnell stated that "the law expressly requires trial by Field General Court-Martial to be held in open court; and that execution not in accordance with the law is murder." He therefore asked whether a public servant who illegally sentenced 130 men to penal servitude—by holding their court-martial *in camera*—is not to be asked under what law he is acting?

No reply!

* * * *

In reply to Mr. Jowett, Mr. Forster stated that it is the custom to grant separation allowance to the full rate where husband and wife have become reconciled.

Then why do cases exist where no credence is given to such reconciliation?

* * * *

Mr. Pringle and Mr. Hogge failed to elicit any definite statement on the question of the Special Register.

* * * *

Mr Roberts announced the intention of the Government to reduce the number of trains from January 1st and to increase fares by 50 per cent. Exemptions from increased fares will be given; we suppose this will cause more work and mean more departments being created!

THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR.

The New Ministries and Secretaries Bill was considered. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald moved an amendment by which the powers and duties of the Home Office with regard to labour should be transferred to the Minister of Labour. Mr. Sherwell seconded the amendment, which was put to a division that resulted in 61 Ayes and 172 Noes.

Mr. Anderson advocated transferring the powers of the Ministry of Munitions to the Labour Minister; this amendment was also negatived.

* * * *

The duties of the Food Controller were discussed, whereupon Mr. Prothero, President of the Board of Agriculture, said: "I am the technical adviser of the Food Controller. He cannot take any steps for the production of food without consultation with me. Neither can I without consultation with him."

* * * *

Mr. Runciman tried to clear the air as to the Shipping Controller's tactics; but nothing definite was divulged.

The Bill was read a third time and passed.

* * * *

On the adjournment of the House, Mr. Dillon made a fervent appeal for the liberation of the Irish prisoners interned in England. He enumerated in detail the amount of injury to British interests which had ensued. He even alleged the failure of the Referendum on Conscription in Australia to be a result of the short-sighted British policy with regard to Ireland.

Mr. Duke, in reply, defended the action of both the late and present Governments. He implied that these 560 untried Irish prisoners were detained and ill-treated "in the interests of the Irish people." The result of his conversation with Mr. Lloyd George was: "To approach the subject with the desire that these men shall be released."

Yet Mr. Duke spoke as though by liberating these prisoners he would be setting free the greatest ruffians to do their worst, either here or at home.

Mr. Samuel, the man responsible for most of the dirty work in connection with the Irish prisoners, expressed the hope that "as a broad act of wise policy" the release of these men would be granted and "this chapter closed in the history of our relations with Ireland."

A wish which every lover of fair play must needs echo!

* * * *

December 21st.—Mr. T. Richardson complained that Patrick O'Daly, a conscientious objector, was discharged from Kew Gardens, where he worked as labourer, because of his refusal to obey the Military Authorities. Now when agriculture wants the assistance of such men, he is in prison!

With reference to agricultural labour, Sir R. Winfrey stated that the Army Council will shortly issue a notice to the effect that men who were to be called up on January 1st and subsequent dates will not be called up before a complete review of the situation is made.

* * * *

The senior medical officer at Frongoch Camp has committed suicide, and Mr. Byrne alleged that this was due to the conditions laid down by the Commandant.

Sir G. Cave said an inquiry was being made.

* * * *

Mr. Roberts announced that the Belfast Linen and Collar Embroidery Trade Board will issue a formal proposal to fix minimum time-rates ranging from 2½d. to 3½d. per hour, also minimum piece-rates for certain operations on January 8th.

What magnanimity!

WOMEN MALTREATED.

Mr. W. Thorne stated that the police searched women employees of the A.B.C. on December 7th, and that no warrant was read. That women and girls were forced into a room to be searched without any explanation; that men were present during the search. One woman was found to have tea in her possession which she had purchased; but she was given no chance to explain; but taken off to the station and charged; out of the 140 employees only three were found in possession of sugar belonging to the firm to the value of 1s.

Sir G. Cave knew nothing; but was making inquiries.

* * * *

"Why must the War go on?" a leaflet published by the Union of Democratic Control and which Mr. Ponsonby said was passed by the Censor, is in Sir G. Cave's words: "Receiving my attention."

Then of what use is the Censor?

* * * *

In reply to questions put by Mr. Watt and Mr. Pringle, Dr. Addison said he had decided to recommend the competent military authority to cancel the Deportation Orders of the Glasgow deportees. The condition was that they sign an undertaking to ventilate their grievances through the orthodox unions. Who is to decide which are the "*orthodox*" unions!

* * * *

The Armenian massacres, according to Lord R. Cecil, have been systematically carried out by the Turks in order to exterminate the race.

What do the Turks say of the treatment of the Irish during the Easter Rebellion?

* * * *

On the Third Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill, Sir John Simon referred to Germany's peace move; besides generalisations, he said that "it necessarily involves an answer from the Allies." Mr. Bonar Law, in reply to Sir John Simon, and also Corporal L. Smith, who said that the soldiers in the trenches want peace, went over the old ground of securing the objects for which we have been fighting, of Germany's breach of faith, the outrages in Belgium and Armenia. "Is there to be no reparation for the wrong done?" was his self-righteous question. It might be answered that the longer the War lasts the more wrongs will be perpetrated by the nations at war!

FIELD PUNISHMENT.

Mr. Morrell, followed by Mr. Billing, gave examples of Field Punishment No. 1 ("Crucifixion") being used for trifling offences, such as clambering up on an ambulance wagon so as not to be left behind. Both members showed that the punishment was unnecessarily harsh and injurious. Mr. Macpherson, however, defended the practice with all the fluency at his command as a lenient form of punishment, absolutely necessary for the discipline of the Army.

When another death or two proves the contrary, perhaps Mr. Macpherson will alter his opinion.

IRISH PRISONERS RELEASED.

The Chief Secretary of Ireland announced that he had advised His Majesty's Government to return the Irish interned prisoners with as little delay as possible to their homes.

Justice at last!

* * * *

Mr. Chancellor and Sir S. Collins demanded some measure to be taken by which the sale of intoxicating drink would be held in bounds. Everything is being controlled and ticketed and inspected, yet intoxicants are still so easily attainable that these members maintain that considerable injury is caused both to army and home workers by drink. The interests of the brewers must indeed be powerful to prevent drastic action being taken by the Government!

* * * *

An additional number of Land Forces not exceeding 1,000,000 of all ranks for the service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad for the year ending March 31st, 1917, was voted.

* * * *

December 22nd.—Sir G. Cave explained that the order for release of Irish prisoners only refers to those who are interned not to those sentenced by courts-martial.

* * * *

In reply to Mr. King, Mr. H. Lewis stated that the total number of school places in public elementary schools now occupied for military purposes is 186,277 or less than 3 per cent. of the total elementary school accommodation. Arrangements for the education of all the children displaced except in the case of one small department had been made.

* * * *

Mr. J. Hope announced that the agreement for the repatriation of British and German civilians over forty-five is not yet concluded. Oh, Lord, how long!

* * * *

The speaker read His Majesty's speech, whereupon the Parliament was prorogued until Wednesday, February 7th, 1917.

"Peace cannot come so long as the destinies of men are determined by small groups who make selfish choices of their own."—President Wilson on the occasion of the illumination of the Liberty Statue in New York Harbour.

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LONDON MEETINGS.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29th.
Cardigan Road, Bow, 11 a.m., Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, Mrs. Boyce.
Salmon and Ball (Bethnal Green), 1 p.m., Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, Mrs. Boyce.
Ford Road, Bow, 3 p.m., Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, Mrs. Boyce.
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30th.
Malmesbury Road, Bow, 11 a.m., Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, Miss Price.
Chrisp Street, Poplar, 3 p.m., Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, Mrs. Boyce.
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31st.
Osborn Street, 11.30 a.m., Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, Mrs. Cresswell, Mr. Genge.
Victoria Park, 3 p.m., Peace Meeting, Mrs. Boyce, Mrs. Bouvier, Mrs. Drake, Miss Lynch, Miss Price, Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, Mrs. Walker.
MONDAY, JANUARY 1st.
White Cross Street, City, 1 p.m., Mrs. Boyce.
TUESDAY, JANUARY 2nd.
Hague Street, Bethnal Green, 3 p.m., Miss Lynch, Miss Price.
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3rd.
53 St. Leonard's Street, 2 p.m., Mrs. Drake.
Poplar Women's Hall, 8.15 p.m., Mr. John Scurr. Lecture; discussion.
THURSDAY, JANUARY 4th.
Club Row (Bethnal Green), 1 p.m., Mrs. Boyce.
FRIDAY, JANUARY 5th.
"Whitehouse" (Canning Town), 3 p.m., Mrs. Bouvier.
Deptford Broadway, 1 p.m., Mrs. Walker.
SATURDAY, JANUARY 6th.
Grundy Street, 11 a.m., Miss Price.
Acton Market Place, 3 p.m., Mrs. Boyce.
Lewisham Market Place, 2 p.m., Mrs. Walker.
SUNDAY, JANUARY 7th.
Hyde Park, 3 p.m., Mrs. Walker.

W.S.F. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Most interesting lectures have been arranged for the coming season, and members and friends are asked to make these fixtures known amongst their friends. The Chandos Hall At Homes will be on Saturday afternoons, lectures and concerts at the Bow Women's Hall on Sunday evenings, and the lectures at Poplar Women's Hall, 20 Railway Street, on Wednesday evenings.

Admission free. All are welcome!

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22 Maiden Lane (off Bedford Street, Strand).

Saturday, Jan. 13th, 3.30 p.m.: Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, "The Present Outlook"; Mr. Shapurji Saklatvala, "A Federated Empire and India." Chair: Miss Lynch.

Saturday, Jan. 20th, 3.30 p.m.: Miss Anna Martin, "The Mothers' Grievance"; Mr. J. S. Attlee, "Equality." Chair: Mrs. Drake.

Jan. 27th, 3.30 p.m.: Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, "The Present Outlook"; Mr. E. L. Mlasky, "The Position of the Jews in Russia and the Right of Asylum." Chair: Mrs. Bouvier.

Feb. 3rd, 3.30 p.m.: Mrs. Coates, "Internationalism and the War"; Rev. Herbert Dunnico, "The Present Outlook." Chair: Miss Norah Smyth.

Saturday, Feb. 17th, 3.30 p.m.: Miss M. A. E. Milton, "Adelheid Popp (an Austrian Working Woman Socialist)"; Mr. S. V. Bracher, "The Future of the British Empire." Chair: Mrs. Boyce.

Saturday, Feb 24th, 3.30 p.m.: Miss Theodora Wilson Wilson, "Alternatives"; Mr. R. Roper, M.A., M.Ed., "Discipline and Punishment." Chair: Mrs. Bouvier.

Saturday, March 3rd, 3.30 p.m.: Mrs. K. Outhwaite, "The Restoration of the Land"; Mr. E. G. Smith, "Can Peace be Enforced." Chair: Miss Norah Smyth.

Saturday, March 10th, 3.30 p.m.: Miss Margaret Hodge, "The Position of Women in the Industrial World during the Last Two Centuries"; Mr. Maurice Hann, "The Evils of Shop Life." Chair: Mrs. Drake.

Saturday, March 17th, 3.30 p.m.: Mrs. C. S. Ganley (L.C.C.), "Children's Care"; Mr. B. N. Langdon Davies, "A Democratic Programme." Chair: Miss Lynch.

Saturday, March 24th, 3.30 p.m.: Mr. George Lansbury, "The Present Outlook"; Miss Amy Haughton, B.A., "The Education We Need." Chair: Mrs. Walker.

Saturday, March 31st, 3.30 p.m.: Madame Lafitte Cyon, "Mothers' Guild"; Miss O'Callaghan, "Ireland's Contribution to Culture." Chair: Mrs. Bouvier.

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Public Meetings, Lectures and Concerts:—

Sunday, Jan. 14th, 1917, 3 p.m.: Peace Conference. Speakers: Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, Dr. Salter. Chair: Mr. Edgar Lansbury.

Sunday, Jan. 21st, 6 p.m.: Miss M. W. Buer, "England in 1815 (the Problem of Peace Then)". Chair: Mrs. Bouvier.

Sunday, Jan. 28th, 6 p.m.: Concert arranged by the People's Concert Society.

Sunday, Feb. 4th, 6 p.m.: Mr. J. Fineberg (B.S.P.), "Utopian and Theoretical Socialism." Chair: Miss Sylvia Pankhurst.

Sunday, Feb. 11th, 6 p.m.: Mr. C. D. King (U.D.C.), "The Workers and British Foreign Policy"; Mrs. Coates, "Women and Patriotism." Chair: Mrs. Boyce.

Sunday, Feb. 18th, 6 p.m.: Mr. E. W. Cant (B.S.P.), "Materialism and the War." Chair: Miss Norah Smyth.

Sunday, Feb. 25th, 6 p.m.: Concert arranged by the People's Concert Society.

Sunday, March 11th, 6 p.m.: Mrs. Bessie Ward, "The Relation of Conscription to Women"; Mr. L. Ginnell, "Irish Aspirations." Chair: Miss O'Callaghan.

Sunday, March 18th, 6 p.m.: Madame Lafitte Cyon, "Socialism in France." Chair: Mrs. Bouvier.

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The action taken by the Joint Board, and the "Statement" issued by the Labour Party, which are referred to in the following pages, deserve a reply. Here it is. It is addressed to the entire Labour, Trade Union, and Socialist organisations of Great Britain. Study it well, and discuss it in your Societies, for the future well-being of the Working-Class Movement depends upon your verdict.

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